

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T STATE 301450

LIMDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT CCGEVA 9445 ACTION SECSTATE 22 DEC 75

QUOTE

S E C R E T GENEVA 9445

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ICRC, IS, PFOR, EG

SUBJECT: ICRC REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN ISRAELI BODY EXCHANGE

1. ICRC DELEGATE GENERAL FOR MIDDLE EAST, MICHEL CONVERS, CALLED ON HAS COUNSELOR TODAY TO REQUEST USG ASSISTANCE IN CLARIFYING "MISUNDERSTANDING" CURRENTLY STYMYING ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN CONCILIATION MOVES.

2. RONVERS, WHO RETURNED FROM CAIRO OVER WEEKEND, STATED THAT AT END OF LAST EXCHANGE OF BODIES FROM 1973 HOSTILITIES, ISRAELIS UNDERSTOOD THERE WERE 17 ISRAELI BODIES REMAINING UNLOCATED IN SUEZ-SINAI BATTLE AREAS. DURING LAST KISSINGER VISIT TO CAIRO, ISRAELIS INFORMED THAT SADAT TOLD SECRETARY THAT NINE OF THESE BODIES WERE

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IN THE HANDS OF EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT. CONVERS SAID

THAT THIS IS MISUNDERSTANDING AND THAT HE HAD BEEN PERSONALLY ASSURED BY MHAMMED RIYADH AND GENERAL MADGOUB QUOTE QUITE FIRMLY UNQUOTE ON SATURDAY, DEC 20 THAT EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT IN FACT HELD NO RPT NO ISRAELI BODIES.

3. ON OTHER HAND, CONVERS REPORTED, ISRAELIS STRONGLY BELIEVE REPORT OF SADAT-KISSINGER CONVERSATION, AND THAT EGYPTIANS IN FACT ARE HOLDING BODIES IN QUESTION. CONVERS STATES HE HAS SPOKEN PERSONALLY ON THIS SUBJECT TO RABIN, PERES AND ALON, WHO STRONGLY OF THIS OPINION.

4. CONVERS underscored that in his judgement "misunderstanding" holding up progress on other humanitarian and peace projects. Pressed for specifics, CONVERS pointed to Israeli halt of release of Egyptian detainees, one of six points they had agreed to earlier this year in exchange for return of 55 Israeli bodies.

5. CONVERS urged all possible USG assistance to help clarify "misunderstanding". Asked if he felt there any possibility of Israeli acceptance of US assurances on this score, CONVERS replied affirmatively, citing recent conversation with Israeli General Safir who, he believed, was prepared accept view that Egyptians in fact do not hold bodies. Please protect foregoing.

6. Would appreciate any advice Department may provide this subject for CONVERS who plans to remain in Switzerland until Jan 7, when he proceeds Middle East again. Dale

UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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NNN

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